

News Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Geriline Daye-Driscoll, district conservationist
(505)542-9141

Conservation Security Program sign-up to begin in Animas Valley and Cloverdale Watersheds

LORDSBURG, NM (March 31, 2008) — A sign-up for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) will be held April 18 to May 16 for producers in the Animas Valley and Cloverdale watersheds in southwest New Mexico, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service has announced.

CSP is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private, agricultural working lands and rewards those producers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations.

The sign-up announcement and specific program requirements are being published in the Federal Register. In addition, NRCS will be conducting a meeting at the Animas Community Center, Monday, April 21 at 6:00 p.m. to provide additional information and answer questions about the program.

Payments can include three components: 1) an annual stewardship component for the base level of conservation treatment; 2) an annual component for maintenance of existing conservation practices; and 3) an enhancement component for exceptional conservation effort. Enhancement activities could include limited pesticide applications, renewable energy generation, and widening existing riparian buffers for restoring stream habitat.

To apply for CSP, NRCS asks potential participants to complete a CSP self-assessment workbook – available on the web or from the Lordsburg NRCS office – to find out if their operation meets the requirements of the program and qualifies for program participation. The self-assessment process is completed using a self-screening questionnaire for each land use to be enrolled. When this process is completed, the producer submits the CSP workbook to the local NRCS office during the sign-up period and meets with NRCS personnel to go over any additional needed documentation. NRCS will then determine if eligibility requirements are met and provide options for the producer's decision on enrollment category placement.

NRCS held the first CSP sign-up in 2004. Today's announcement brings the number of watersheds enrolled to 331 across the nation, covering 247.7 million acres that have been eligible for the program. CSP is offered on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows. Additional information on CSP, including eligible watersheds and a CSP self-assessment workbook is available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.

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